Me too for web 2.0? Patterns of online campaigning among candidates in the 2010 UK general elections[1]

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Abstract

In this study, we seek to provide an analysis of candidates' online campaigning in the 2010 British general election. Previous characterizations of online campaigns have tended to focus on the presence of candidates' campaign websites, and, more recently, on their use of various web 2.0 campaigning instruments. In this research, we provide continuity with past investigations by comparing the patterns that have helped to explain the uptake of campaign websites by candidates with patterns of uptake of a web 2.0 campaign platform, namely Facebook. We find some overlaps, partisan patterns and marginality appear to play relatively similar roles in explaining both types of activity; however the pre-campaign 'favorite' status of candidates appears to explain candidates launching a website, but not a Facebook page, whereas incumbency and the web activities of opponents in a candidate's constituency both help to explain Facebook usage but not launching a website. We discuss the implications of these findings for our understanding of the evolution of cyber-campaigning.

[1] First draft – *please do not cite* without permission of the authors.

Intro

After the enthusiasm generated by the innovative use of web 2.0 platforms during the 2008 US presidential campaign, especially by the Obama campaign team, observers and scholars of new media and politics anticipated further innovation in the 2010 UK legislative campaign. Indeed, the UK general election was expected to be the first European case of a 'Web 2.0 election'. However, while the election campaign and result were both highly unusual; if any communication medium imposed itself as dominant, it was television, not the internet. Three debates – each pitting the three largest parties' leaders against each other – were broadcast by the three biggest television networks in the country (BBC, Sky and ITV) in the run up to the May 6 election[2]. From April 15th on, every Thursday night offered the British public[3] the possibility of seeing the party leaders squaring off against each other; outlining their parties' positions on domestic, international and economic affairs, respectively.

Even though we do not (yet) know the extent to which they effected the final election outcome, the leaders' debates certainly were to the fore in the media and popular attention. It was also through Sky TV's microphones that the 'bigotgate' incident exploded on April 28th, when PM Gordon Brown was caught on a microphone calling Labour supporter Gillian Duffy a 'bigoted woman'. Thirteen years after 'the first internet election' (Gibson and Ward 1997), one may have expected the 2010 election to be an 'internet election' *par excellence*, in the same fashion as the 2008 US presidential election. While some have talked about the 'first social media election'[4], others have claimed that 'above all the 2010 General Election shows that it is time to put aside the idea of an internet election'[5]. Nonetheless,

[2] The three networks put together a joint proposal in early October 2009.
[3] The second debate was also available in streaming with no limits to the international public on the sky website.
[4] http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2010/apr/30/social-media-election-2010
[5] http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/blogs/edemocracy/archive/2010/06/02/online-campaigning-10-lessons-from-the-general-election.aspx

while the web did not take the lead as a campaign medium, it definitely played a major role, mostly thanks to web 2.0 applications that worked as add-ons to 'traditional' methods of campaigning. Social media were used by candidates and parties in the form of social networks, blogs, and micro blogging tools. Over 600 candidates used Twitter, and Facebook was populated by groups supporting or opposing parties and candidates; moreover, the real-time reaction capabilities of the web generated an array of reactions to the candidates' debates that could be followed live during the debates. For instance, on the 15th of April, the evening of first debate, over 128,000 tweets were sent with the 'leadersdebate' hash tag.

Web 1.0 forms of online campaigning were also employed: individualized candidate websites were launched, and parties dedicated pages of their website to the promotion of candidates running for the general election. In this article, however, we do not assess the overall impact of the internet on the election, nor its contribution to electoral success. Instead, we focus on the patterns of adoption of online platforms in candidates' campaigns. We attempt to determine what factors can help to predict the occurrence of web campaigns, both in terms of personal websites (Web 1.0) and in the use of the world's most subscribed-to social networking site: Facebook. Specifically, we build on previous literature on the uptake of 'Web 1.0' online campaigns (Ward, Gibson et al. 2005; Williams and Gulati 2006; Williams and Gulati 2007; Zittel 2007; Gibson, Lusoli et al. 2008; Williams and Gulati 2008; Gibson and Ward 2009; Williams 2009) in order to explore the extent to which observed patterns of uptake of Web 1.0 instruments are useful in explaining the use made by candidates of Facebook in their campaigns in the 2010 UK general election.

Web 1.0, Web 2.0, and the study of electoral campaigns

Cyber campaigns are a relatively new phenomenon, however more and more scholars have engaged with their study in the past years. As such, a number of studies have mapped the use of the internet by candidates and parties over a range of countries: from the US (Gibson 2001; Foot and Schneider 2002; Bimber and Davis

2003; Vaccari 2007; Vaccari 2009) to the UK and Ireland (Gibson and Ward 1998; Ward, Gibson et al. 2003; Ward, Gibson et al. 2005; Sudulich and Wall 2009), Italy(Newell 2001; Lusoli 2007; Vaccari 2007), Germany (Gibson, Ward et al. 2003; Gibson, Römmele et al. 2003; Gibson and Rommele 2005; Schweitzer 2005; Zittel 2007; Schweitzer 2008), Australia (Weiner 1987; Gibson and Ward 2002; Gibson and Ward 2003; Gibson and McAllister 2006; Gibson and McAllister 2008), France (Vaccari 2008; Bastien and Greffet 2009) and the European elections (Norris 2000; Jankowski, Foot et al. 2005; Lusoli 2005; Lusoli 2005; Lusoli 2005).

Parties and candidates do appear to attempt to mobilize voters through the web, and experimental evidence (Vissers, Stolle et al. 2010) shows that online mobilization is 'proved to be at least as effective as face-to-face mobilization'. Norris and Curtice (2008) contribute to this debate, arguing that there may exist a two-step process of information diffusion, with highly politically-interested individuals consulting political websites in the first step, and then discussing the policies and information that they found online with associates, friends, and family in the second step. The Obama campaign offered new insights into the potential of internet-based mobilization, making a strong case for those who would view the internet as a means of communication that can be exploited successfully in the process of mobilizing and engaging citizens.

Only a few years ago, the study of politics online meant describing and analysing parties' and candidates' websites. Nowadays, political analysts interested in the internet must cast their nets considerably wider: Facebook, twitter, blogs, flickr, youtube and other platforms that belong to the 'web 2.0' paradigm of user-created content have been taken up in earnest by political actors – from governments, to individuals campaigning for election, to advocacy and interest groups. Elaborating a precise and all-encompassing definition of web 2.0 is rather tricky, as it is used as an umbrella term for a number of platforms that have in common large degrees of interactivity and user- generated content, but which vary dramatically in terms of the type of content that users generate, the proportion of the sites' contents that users generate, and approaches to the control and dissemination of the resultant

content. Scheun (2008) attempted to define the term as follows:'Web 2.0 is read-write. Earlier versions of the web were more passive and encouraged only downloading, whereas the new applications are more interactive and dynamic, encouraging users to be more involved and upload content onto the web' (Shuen 2008). Web 2.0 applications favor the intervention of users, or, in O'Reily's words, 'the collective intelligence of users to build applications that literally get better the more people use them' (O'Reilly, preface to Shuen 2008). As such, the implementation of Web 2.0 platforms for political campaigns represents a fascinating empirical phenomenon for political scientists to study and, potentially, a key development of electoral campaigns.

A number of scholars have focused on the historical development of electoral campaigns and, despite the multiplicity of labels in use, they all seem to agree on the fact that the history of electoral campaigns is tripartite. The very latest stage of campaign style is commonly defined as post-modern campaigning (Norris 2000) or phase 3 campaigning (Farrell and Webb 2000). Norris identifies two previous phases of electoral campaigning: initially there was 'pre-modern' campaigning; a form of political communication that was based on capillary diffusion of information across the territory, performed by party members (pre-modern). This phase was overtaken by 'modern' campaigning methods; which involved indirect campaigning performed by mass media such as TV and radio (Norris 2000; Norris 2005). Each of these models of political communication corresponds to different types of party organizational arrangements; the pre-modern phase was based on local branches' activities and ideological identification of the electorate with the party. The modern phase was based on the rise of party organizational centralization, falling levels of party attachment (Gibson and Römmele 2001), and electoral volatility. From the mid-nineties on, parties seem to have entered an identifiable third phase of campaigning; whatever label we use to indicate such a change, one of its crucial characteristics is the intensive use of new technologies: 'the increasing efforts by the parties to reach individual voters via the internet, direct mail, and telemarketing' (Gibson and Römmele 2001).

Web 2.0 platforms' integration in electoral campaigns are of particular interest for post-modern campaigning developments. User-generated content such as YouTube videos, Facebook group, fan, and antagonist pages have made a breakthrough in election campaigns, and they have not necessarily always been controlled exclusively by parties or candidates. On one hand, web 2.0 platforms allow users to talk, broadcast and picture politics without institutionalized political actors being involved, in a sort of 'spontaneous' form of political activity. On the other hand, institutionalized political actors themselves have started making themselves use of blogs, social networks and video sharing platforms. We focus on the latter side of the relationship between electoral campaigns and we 2.0 platforms, by seeking a greater understanding of the reasons why candidates integrate such platforms in their campaign strategies.

The study of web 2.0 cyber-campaigns is in a nascent state at this point in time. Previous studies have tended to focus either on the factors explaining the uptake of Web 1.0 instruments and/or the effectiveness of these instruments as campaign tools. Broadly, the two questions that the literature has focused on are: 1) why do parties and candidates go online? (Jackson 2003; Zittel 2007; Gibson, Lusoli et al. 2008) and 2) does going online win parties and candidates any votes? votes (Gibson and Rommele 2005; Gibson and McAllister 2006; Gibson and McAllister 2008; Williams 2008; Sudulich and Wall 2009; Williams 2009; Sudulich and Wall 2010). Despite the existence of several studies pointing out a positive relationship between campaigning online and winning, not much attention has been paid to the implications of this correlation. In the same fashion, a limited number of studies have dealt with the empirical evaluation of why candidates decide to launch campaign sites (i.e. Web 1.0 platforms), not much is yet known about the uptake of Web 2.0 platforms by candidates in elections. However, this question represents a key step in better understanding the nature and role of online electoral campaigns; examining patterns of uptake allows us to consider the motivations of politicians in launching web 2.0 campaign platforms, as well as to better forecast future developments in cyber-campaigning. It is especially interesting to see whether the insights of scholarship on the uptake of web 1.0 can be extended to web 2.0. This

analysis improves our understanding of the similarities and differences between the two types of cyber-campaign instruments. Therefore, in this article, we seek to shed some light on process of development - from web 1.0 to web 2.0 – of online electoral campaigns; focusing on how candidates adopt the two types of technologies. More precisely, we aim to understand whether the explanatory paradigm designed to understand web 1.0 is still valid with regard to web 2.0, and to examine what sort of considerations should drive the study of web 2.0 in electoral campaigns.

Theory

Research on predictors of online campaigning at the candidate-level is limited to a small number of empirical studies, and the greater majority of these focus on campaign websites. We will make use of this literature in looking at candidates' use of camapign websites the 2010 UK election, and we will expand on it by looking also and specifically at forms of web 2.0 online campaign; namely Facebook pages.
We try to clarify whether elements regarded as influential in explaining the presence of web 1.0 cyber-campaigns are also motivating the process of campaigning on social networking sites.

Moreover, we intend to explore the relationship between candidates' websites and Facebook presence and we seek to understand whether their uptake appears to be explained by different logics of online campaigning. Our contribution to the literature on cyber-campaign is twofold: firstly, we attempt an understanding of the reasons that bring candidates online with personal websites and SNS; secondly, we investigate the extent to which the patterns that help to explain the uptake of web 1.0 platforms in political campaigns help to explain the uptake of a web 2.0 platforms in political campaigns. Formally, we investigate the following research questions:

- What are the elements determining the uptake of online campaigning by candidates in the UK 2010 election?

- Is the rationale behind launching a campaign website different from the one explaining candidates' presence on Facebook in the UK 2010 election?

To date, research on the determinants of campaigning online has pointed to a number of elements being potentially influential. We empirically test an explanatory model built on previously proven influential factors, and we elaborate on a number of potentially influential new elements. We seek to do so by looking at two levels of online competition: candidates' websites and candidates' presence on social networking sites. In the next sections, we outline the range of dependent and independent variable in use here and the models used to test for the existence of a relationship between independent to dependent variables.

The dependent variables

We make use of multiple dependent variables in this study; we first look at candidates' adoption of individualized campaign websites, which allows us to compare the 2010 election with previous studies of the British case (Jackson 2003; Gibson, Lusoli et al. 2008). Furthermore, we seek to explain the likelihood of campaigning on a web 2.0 platform: Facebook, given the same range of explanatory variables used to explain the launch of a campaign website. We focus on online campaigning on Facebook because it represents the most diffuse social networking site in the UK.

Created in February 2004, with the name 'The Facebook,' by a Harvard undergraduate student, Facebook was meant to be a platform to be used by Harvard students to keep in touch after graduation. However, within a few months, 'The Facebook' became a mass phenomenon, quickly transcending the border of University related networks. Facebook creator, Mark Zuckerberg, had not foreseen in 2004 the growth in terms of popularity and profit the company would have had in a very short amount of time; in August 2008, the company was estimated to be worth between 3.5 and billion dollars.

Recently, in March 2010, Facebook passed Google as the most visited website in the US[6] and it is been the second (after google UK) most visited website in the UK for over a year (source: alexa.com). Moreover, 97% of Britons aged 18-24 used Facebook during the campaign; 89% of this age group has used Facebook as news source, overtaking TV (81%) and newspapers (59%)[7]. Facebook allows for a wide range of activities: real time chat, publication of photos and videos, gifts, games and blogs. Furthermore, Facebook allows for a number of different typologies of pages (group page/ fan page/ profile page) to be created by users. The flexibility provided by the platform together with its viral diffusion make of it an ideal tool of online campaigning. Facebook's possible influence on electoral campaigns has already been analyzed, and some academic attention has been given to the phenomenon in North America (Williams and Gulati 2007; Small 2008; Williams and Gulati 2008; Williams 2008; Williams 2009) and in a number of European Countries (Carlson and Strandberg 2008; Kalnes 2008).

In this study, we distinguish between three types of candidate Facebook pages that are potentially relevant to electoral campaigns: profile pages, fan pages, and group pages. We focus on these pages – assuming that each candidate could potentially launch any of these three page types for campaigning purposes – in aiming to identifying relevant patterns of variance. Profile pages are linked to personal profiles, they can be used to send messages to one's 'friend's' an as a kind of online profile for users, however they may not be the best campaigning tools for those candidates who also want to use Facebook for their own private life. On the other hand, group and fan pages represent better campaign options, they can be designed for a special purpose – in this case, an electoral campaign – and they do not interfere with the private use one may want to make of Facebook. Group pages have an administrator, they can be open to anyone or conditional to administrator's approval; administrators are in charge of the group page's management, they approve requests, they invite users to join and they can appoint officers. Overall,

[6] http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/blog/2010/mar/15/Facebook-passes-google-share-us
[7] http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/organgrinder/2010/jul/12/reuters-social-media-report

group pages offer higher control on who gets to join it, however there is no moderator so that the group activities remain somewhat uncontrolled. Fan pages don't require administrators and, contrary to group pages, they can host applications, which make of them a rather personalized sort of space. Groups are therefore easier to control for a campaign team, whereas fan pages can be initiated by anyone and they do not need much maintenance. Therefore, we look at all the aforementioned possibilities, assuming that they could all be used as online campaign tools.

The dependent variables are all binary, so that the analysis of their determinants takes the form of logistic regressions.

Independent variables:

Previous studies (Gibson and Rommele 2005; Ward and Vedel 2006; Gibson, Lusoli et al. 2008; Sudulich and Wall 2009) proved that party affiliation tends to play a significant role in determining candidates' proclivity to engage in online campaigning. More importantly for the election studied in this paper, Gibson et al. (2008) showed that party affiliation was a significant determinant of online campaigning in the UK for the 2005 elections, and that the Conservative candidates were most likely to launch online campaigns. As such, we control for party affiliation[8] and we expect this factor to continue to play an important role in explaining online campaigns both in terms of campaign websites and activity on Facebook.

To date, candidates' incumbency status has been positively associated with online campaigning in a number of studies (Carlson 2007; Gibson, Lusoli et al. 2008) and in the UK context incumbency seems to be a strong predictor of online campaigning.

[8] While agreeing with Gibson and McAllister (2006), that party affiliation and party support (i.e. the financial aid and technical expertise made available to candidates) represent two different concepts, however we are unable to control for party support. Gibson and McAllister (2006), measured party support via survey data and Sudulich and Wall (2009) via electoral expenses; given the nature of our data we are inclined to replicate the latter approach. Unfortunately spending data from the Electoral Commission are not publically accessible at the time of writing.

While incumbency and party affiliation are widely accepted as useful predictors of online campaigning, marginality is a rather controversial element. Zittel (2007) found marginality to be a significant predictor of online campaigning in Germany, but Gibson et al (2008) found no significant effect of marginality on candidates' online campaigning in Australian federal elections Sudulich and Wall (2009) replicated Gibson et al.'s finding of non-significance in the Irish context. Also, studies of cyber-campaigning in the UK have resulted in mixed evidence; Jackson (2003) found no relation between launching a candidate website and running in a marginal constituency, whereas Gibson et al. (2008) found a positive and significant relationship. As such, the question of whether marginality represents an influential factor in explaining online campaigning is an still open one, and we contribute to the debate in this study by making use of a measure of marginality that improves on those employed in previous studies. Most measures of marginality capture the constituency marginality rather than the marginality of each *candidate's* campaign. Moreover, marginality is usually measured *ex-post*, by looking at actual electoral results. This is problematic, as the theoretical assumption is that candidates take their perceptions of marginality into account when deciding to use online campaign tools, however electoral performance does not always correspond to pre-campaign expectations.

We capture candidate-level of marginality, measured at the start of the formal campaign period, by making use of bookmaker's odds on each candidate winning their seat as measured 4 weeks before election day. Betfair offered candidates' odds throughout the campaign and transposed them into implied chances of electoral success. We used the candidates' chances of winning their seats (according to the bookies) four weeks before the election as baseline to estimate marginality, which was calculated as the absolute distance between each candidate's implied chance of success and .5, which represented an even or 50:50 chance. An implied chance of 0 represents no possible chance of winning and an implied chance of 1 represents a 100% certainty of victory. Our measure seeks to distinguish between those candidates who had a fair chance of winning at the outset of the campaign and those who were nearly certain of either losing or winning. The closer this measure is to 0

(i.e. the closer a candidate's chances are to .5), the more marginal the campaign is, according to our measure. The campaign becomes less marginal as the measure approaches .5 – either because the candidate becomes increasingly likely to win or because they become increasingly likely to lose. As such, we expect a negative coefficient sign from this variable when used as explanatory element of cyber campaigning; if more marginal candidates are indeed more likely to engage in cyber-campaigns than sure winners or sure losers.

We examine the role played by candidates 'frontrunner' status by including our analytic model the implied chance derived from the bookmakers' odds data four weeks before the election. While the marginality measure distinguishes between marginal and non marginal campaigns, the implied chance variable indicates the likelihood of success of each campaign. As outlined above, the non-marginal status of a campaign could be given by both having too little chances or running a campaign that has reasonably high chances of being successful whereas the candidates' implied chances of success, as measured by the bookmakers, provides us with a ratio measure of each candidate's likelihood of winning their seat.

Finally, we replicate the approach of Sudulich and Wall (2009) in providing a control for what has been called the me too effect (Selnow 1998). The 'me too' effect at the candidate level was described as capturing the pressure that candidates may feel when their constituency opponents have already established their online presence (Sudulich and Wall 2009). It derives from the argument made by Selnow at the party level – the more common parties' websites became, the higher pressure each party felt of establishing an online presence not to fall behind – and it was proven to a significant predictor of candidates' launching a campaign websites in the Irish case by Sudulich and Wall. Here, we seek to test the validity of the 'me too' argument for the uptake of web 2.0 tools; we construct a variable that measures the 'me too' effect for each form of online presence, therefore for each form taken by the dependent variable. Technically, the variable is calculate as W/O where W is the number of opponents in the constituency having established a presence in terms of websites, fan page, group page and profile page respectively. O is the total number

of opposing candidates in the constituency. W have 4 different forms of 'me too', one for websites and three for the forms of Facebook presence that we study in this paper (group page, fan page and profile page).

Overall, the models tested here take the following form:

$$pj = \frac{1}{1 + e - z}$$

Where:

$z = \beta_0 + \beta X_1 + \beta X_2 + \beta X_3 + \beta X_4 + \beta X_5 + \varepsilon$

pj= Probability of having a campaign website/ FB group page/ FG fan page/FG profile page

X_1= incumbency
X_2 =marginality
X_3= party affiliation
X_4 =bookmakers odds
X_5 = me too effect for each dependent variable

We test this model on a sample of 137 constituencies, for which we performed a search for candidates running for the three major parties in the 2010 UK elections[9]: Labour the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. .

Analysis

The sample of constituencies that we analyzed show rather large variation in terms of online tools. Table 1 below reports percentages of candidates' online presence by

[9] Northern Irish parties are excluded.

party.

[Table 1 about here]

Accroding to these descriptive figures, Conservative candidates seem to be the most active in terms of launching campaign websites and Facebook group pages, with Lib Dem candidates only marginally behind. Labour candidates, on the other hand appear somewhat less active online, being similar to the other parties' figures only in terms of fan pages.

The percentages reported above give us some indications of how diverse the three main parties were in terms of internet use and point to a relative large degree of variation among them. In order to explain such variation we run the causal model outlined in the previous section over the four different dependent variables.

Table 2 below shows the results for the four dependent variables.

[Table 2 about here]

We begin by looking at the model's performance as a predictor of candidates' launching of campaign websites, what we can call the web 1.0 form of online campaigning. The regression analyses confirm most of what was found by Gibson et al. in their study of online campaigns for the 2005 UK election (2008). Marginality is positive and statistically significant with 99% confidence, indicating that candidates running a marginal campaign are most likely to launch a campaign website. Party affiliation is also a significant predictor of launching campaign websites, with Conservatives and Lib Dem candidates being (respectively) marginally and significantly more likely to establish their own campaign website than Labour candidates. Gibson et al (2008) had found that the Conservatives led the way in terms of campaign sites in 2005, whereas in our results the coefficient for Lib Dem is

slightly higher than the coefficient for Conservatives. However, we use different reference categories, so that a meaningful comparison is not possible in this case. We can confirm, however, that party affiliation does play a role in determining likelihood of launching online campaigns in the 2010 elections.

The biggest difference between the findings reported in Table 2 and those of Gibson et al. (2008) has to do with the insignificance of incumbency as a predictor of launching a website in the 2010 cyber campaign. The proportion of constituency opponents with campaign websites; the 'me too' variable, is not a good predictor of candidates launching a campaign website. However, before moving to the next model and debating the comparative explanatory power of the causal model in use here, we translate the logistic regression coefficients into probabilities in order to make the role of each significant element more intuitive – and to examine their joint contribution in predicting the probability of a candidate launching a website[10]. Table 3 below summarizes those probabilities.

[Table 3 about here]

Candidates with very little chance of winning a seat are have a 42% likelihood of launching a campaign website, whereas candidates with very high chances of winning are almost twice as likely do to so. 'No hoper' candidates – those with both a minimum chance of victory and running a non marginal campaign – have a 30% likelihood of establishing a campaign website. Such a figure is of particular interest; even if those candidates don't have a reasonable chance of success, they still seem to be keen on establishing an online presence. Indeed, in the same vein, candidates running non-marginal campaigns (because either certain of winning or losing) are still about 50% likely to launch a campaign website. That may suggest that the practice of launching campaign website is somewhat embedded in the campaign practice; while being more common between candidates with good probabilities of

[10] The translation of coefficients into probabilities was obtained via the QSIM package in STATA 10.

success, it is not uncommon between no hopers and virtually secure winners.

With regard to web 2.0, our model performed somewhat inconsistently across different possible forms of Facebook campaign presence. The model performed poorly in predicting the presence of candidates profile pages and fan pages. For those two forms of online presence none of the predictors we use seem to have an impact. Party affiliation, likelihood of winning, the marginality of the campaign, pressure from opponent's activity, and incumbency status do not significantly predict candidates having a Facebook profile. Such a finding can be interpreted as a clear indication that candidates do not appear to use their own personal Facebook profiles as campaign tools. If none of the campaign-related variables significantly predict candidates having a profile page, it may as well be the case that the existence of those pages has no relation at all with the campaign. The null finding is slightly more problematic when we look at the case of fan pages. As was the case for personal profiles, fan pages do not appear to have any relation whatsoever with the campaign-related variables considered in this study. Table 1 clearly shows that fan pages were rather uncommon, with only about 20% of candidates from the three major parties having this form of Facebook presence. Moreover, the lack of control over fan pages may be a disincentive for candidates who prefer being able to exercise some form of control on their presence on social networking sites. Uncontrolled loci could indeed turn out to be counterproductive.

Group pages always offer the option of removing members, whereas fan pages don't; as such, group pages seem to be much safer options for those who like to enjoy the openness and interactivity of Facebook, but also wish to be able to remove unwanted content/users. This represents a key difference between group and fan pages; where fan pages could be easily manipulated and used by detractors, group pages won't let that happen. Indeed, the explanatory model that we used for websites gives significant results only once applied to this particular form of Facebook pages. The second column of table 2 shows that most independent variables considered are significant predictors of candidates having a group page. Party affiliation is a good predictor, with Conservative and LibDem candidates again

both more likely than Labour candidates to launching group pages on Facebook. Marginality also plays a role in predicting such an outcome, marginal candidates being more likely than non-marginal ones. Incumbency is also significant (at 99%) and positively signed, showing that incumbents are more likely to establish their presence on Facebook. This differs from what seen with regard to websites, where incumbency did not play a significant role. However, possibly the biggest difference between the two models is represented by the 'me too' variable being significant for Facebook group pages. The mechanism of pressure exercised by one's constituency opponents being active on web 2.0 platforms seems to be a good predictor of launching a group. The 'me too' variable is significant at the highest level, indicating that the such a logic plays a role in determining different levels of activity on Facebook. In table 3, we show how different values of the significant predictors determine shifts in the predicted probability of positive outcomes and with regard to me too we can see that the difference between no opponents launching a Facebook presence and all the opponents having done so results in a 26% shift in likelihood of campaigning via a Facebook group page.

[Table 3 about here]

In other words, a candidate running in a constituency where all of his/her opponents have established a Facebook page is 26% more likely to launch his/her own Facebook page than a candidate running in a constituency where no opponent has established a Facebook presence.

Such peer-pressure, combined with campaign marginality and incumbency status result in a 86% likelihood of establishing a group campaign page on Facebook. This particular finding has a number of important implications .

First and foremost, the 'me too' effect seems to evolve: at first, in the late Nineties, it was postulated as a significant factor in determining the decision of political parties to go online (Selnow 1998), it was then proved to be a significant predictor of candidate launching individual campaign sites in the 2007 Irish general election (Sudulich and Wall 2009) when campaign websites still represented – or, at least,

were perceived to represent in that specific election context - the cutting edge of online campaigning tools. In 2010, it is found to be one of the significant predictors of launching web 2.0 campaigns, representing the newest form of online electioneering. In the 2010 UK election, the 'me too' logic seems to have migrated from web 1.0 to web 2.0.. This would suggest firstly that there might be different rationales behind cyber campaigning on web 2.0 platforms than in terms of campaign websites, and secondly that there could be online campaign dynamics based around novelty and being perceived as cutting-edge that have moved from web 1.0 campaign tools to web 2.0 platforms.

A Multi Level Model control

Before analyzing the implications of our findings concerning the 'me too' variable, we perform an extra piece of analysis to double-check the validity of these findings. The explanatory variables in use in model 2 are all straightforwardly measured at the individual-level, with the exception of the 'me too' variable, which is an individual-level indicator derived from constituency-level factors. As explained earlier, the 'me too' variable is the ratio of opponent having a Facebook page over the total number of opponents in the constituency. The effect of the 'me too' variable may, therefore be overestimated as a result of misspecification. In other terms, we ought to perform robustness check of our findings in order to clarify the effect of the 'me too' variable by means of a multilevel model. We do so and report our findings in table 4 below.

[Table 4 about here]

Table 4 shows the findings of a multilevel model that evaluates the role of constituency-level differences in determining the outcomes of model 2, and separates constituency-level effects from individual-level effects.

The multilevel model substantially confirms the results of the logistic regression. The predictors used in the logistic models are all confirmed in the directions of their effects and in their level of significance (or insignificance).As such, using the multilevel model, we confirmed our findings that party affiliation, marginality, incumbency, and, most importantly, the 'me-too' effect appear to be significant determinants of a candidate's likelihood to campaign via group pages on Facebook. As a consequence, we can safely rely on the value of the 'me too' variable, whose significance is not determined by a model misspecification. On the contrary, its value is confirmed to be resistant to a control for constituency-level differences, which do not seem to be playing a significant role.

Discussion

This investigation of determinants of cyber campaigning in terms of web 1.0 and web 2.0 activity has produced a number of surprising findings and has left us with a challenging puzzle to solve. We have found a number of important differences concerning what appears to determine cyber campaigning in terms of web 1.0 and web 2.0. Party affiliation plays a significant role in both cases and, in the run up to the 2010 campaign Labour was somewhat behind the parties that eventually formed the coalition government. This finding seems to be coherent with the pattern previously observed for the 2005 UK election (Gibson, Lusoli et al. 2008). Therefore, Labour candidates continue to be characterized by a weaker online presence.

If candidates' party affiliation was expected to be a significant determinant of campaigning online, the findings with regard to other variable tested in the model are to some extent unexpected. Firstly, the literature was ambiguous regarding the impact of marginality, however it has proven to be a stable predictor of candidates' likelihood to launch both web 1.0 and 2.0 campaign tools in our analysis of the 2010 UK elections. Our measure of marginality is computed at the level of individual candidates, which represents a difference from previously employed measures. Moreover, the measure in use here is *a priori* and provides us with a sort of perception candidates may have had before election day. Even though we

acknowledge that bookmakers' odds on political events as elections could be wrong, the likelihood of the odds being very bad predictors is rather low (Gallagher 2008).

We also controlled for each candidate's implied likelihood of winning a seat. We did so by using their implied chance of victory provided by bookmakers four weeks before the day of the election. This provided us with a measure that could tell apart candidates that could be considered as frontrunners from those with a very small chance of success. The implied chance measure seems to play a role in determining a greater likelihood in launching a campaign website, on the other hand, it does not appear affect the likelihood of a candidate having a presence on Facebook. Such a variable captures something different from the marginality of a campaign, and it being significant only in the case of websites seems to suggest that there may be different logics - and different costs - involved in the two forms of campaign activities online. It may be the case that frontrunner candidates actually feel more pressure than other candidates to launch a website, knowing that media and supporters will want to follow the campaign a possibility to which both D'Alessio (1997) and Gibson and McAllister (2006) refer. Alternatively, it could be the case that the 'frontrunner' status captured by the implied chance variable actually acts as a proxy for resources, which would open up different scenarios. Unfortunately, at this stage spending data are not yet available to the public, and performing a control for such a possibility is simply not possible. This remains one of the first steps to be undertaken by further research.

Possibly, the most interesting finding of our analysis is the 'me too' variable being a significant predictor of launching a Facebook campaign group, while being not a significant predictor of launching a website. We ascertained that such an effect does not depend on a misspecification, by running a parallel multilevel model. From its outcomes, we understand that the peer pressure coming from the online activity of opponents is effectively a determinant of campaigning on Facebook. However, the same peer pressure does not apply to at play in explaining a candidate launching a campaign website. That may suggest that the 'me too' effect captures pressures to take up campaign tools that are seen as innovative, or, perhaps, that are not yet well

understood, rather than for campaign tools that are already established.

Overall, the differences that we found on the two forms of online campaigning seem to point towards two different slightly different rationales, with some notable similarities (i.e. the role of party affiliation and marginality). Once again, the difference may be motivated by differences in terms of resources availability, which cannot be controlled for at this stage. Facebook pages are completely cost free; they do require an investment in terms of time spent establishing maintaining them, but they don't have any monetary cost. On the contrary, campaign websites need to be paid for and require a slightly higher investment in maintenance. Also, the reasons for using web 2.0 spaces and campaign websites may differ to the point of representing to different levels of competition; where symbolic and strategic considerations are combined in different proportions. We associate the significance of the 'me too' variable to a range of symbolic considerations that candidates seems to make. The pressure coming from being challenged by technologically advanced opponents appears to be an element of concern for candidates. If web 2.0 is the latest technological development, is on that ground that candidates may want to express their 'withitiness', that is, their capacity to be up-to-date.

Finally, web 1.0 and web 2.0 tools could be used in order to reach different types of audience. Facebook is the most preferred platform of very young people, who also gather political information though it. Thus, candidates may use Facebook with the specific goal of reaching first-time voters.

We also have to take into account the different level of explanatory power of the model on the two dependent variables. The explanatory power of the model we run on Facebook is dramatically lower than the on campaign websites, indicating that there is much we don't know about the latest form of campaign communication.

Overall, our investigation of online campaigning on web 1.0 and web 2.0 has left us with a rather large number of unsolved questions, but it has given also powerful indication that campaigning online is becoming a multidimensional phenomenon that does not start and end with campaign websites. The dynamics of online campaigning become more intricate and affect post-modern campaign in a powerful

manner, by opening up new battlegrounds and multiplying the levels of competition.

TABLES:

Table 1. Candidates' use of web by party, percentages

	Conservatives	Labour	LibDem	Plaid	SNP
Personal Website	67	39	62	-	-
FB Profile page	22	19	41	-	-
FB Group page	54	37	49	29	33
FB Fan page	22	19	21	14	11

Table 2. Overview of explanatory factors for website and Facebook pages

VARIABLES	(1) Website	(2) Group page	(3) Fan page	(4) Profile page
Conservatives	0.682**	0.814***	0.345	0.0392
	(0.316)	(0.315)	(0.374)	(0.349)
Lib Dem	0.811***	0.551**	0.219	0.962***
	(0.269)	(0.268)	(0.317)	(0.291)
Me_too_web1	0.411			
	(0.527)			
Incumbent	-0.267	0.925***	0.362	-0.169
	(0.360)	(0.334)	(0.379)	(0.361)
Marginality	-2.784***	-2.262***	-0.395	-1.196
	(0.857)	(0.759)	(0.868)	(0.818)
Implied chance	1.849***	-0.252	-0.147	-0.0509
	(0.482)	(0.466)	(0.531)	(0.507)
Me too group		1.438***		
		(0.480)		
Me too fan			1.051	
			(0.644)	
Me too profile				0.601
				(0.592)
Constant	0.0992	-0.389	-1.594***	-0.967**
	(0.481)	(0.415)	(0.476)	(0.423)
Nagelkerke R2	.23	.12	.01	.06
Observations	411	411	411	411

Note: Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

A control for constituency characteristics that may affect the extent to which candidates may use the internet – namely the percentage of young people in each constituency - was performed. However, such a control lowers the number of observations and it is not statistically significant, therefore unreported here.

Table 3.Predicted probability on Website, using QSIM

	Probability	SE
Chance Min	.42	.045
Chance Max	.81	.054
Marginal	.77	.057
Non Marginal	.48	.039
Non marginal with lowest chance, no hoper	.33	.042

Table 4. Predicted probability on GROUP, using QSIM

	Probability	SE
Non incumbent, candidate' s marginality and 'me too' at min	.24	.041
Incumbent, marginal, max 'me too'	.86	.050
'me too' at min	.36	.038
'me too' at μ- σ	.39	.034
'me too' at μ	.46	.025
'me too' at μ+ σ	.54	.035
Me to at max	.62	.054
Incumbent	.62	.056
Non incumbent	.39	.033

Table 4. MLM, determinants of Facebook group pages

Conservatives	.783**
	(.302)
Lib Dem	.533**
	(.267)
SNP	.034
	(.867)
Plaid Cymru	.083
	(.782)
Me too group	1.31**
	(.463)
Incumbent	.0900**
	(0.324)
Marginality	-2.46**
	(0.755)
Implied chance	-.218
	(0.443)
Constant	-.269
	(0.404)
Parameter: Constituency	2.88e-07
	(.252)
Observations	426
N of groups	137
Avg observations per group	3.1

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